



Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.

December 6, 1942 - May 17, 2024

KEYS, SR., Pastor James H. "Jaybird" - age 81, passed away Friday, May 17, 2024 in Pontiac, Michigan. Family hour 10:00AM Saturday, June 1, 2024 at Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, 113-123 Wessen Street, with funeral commencing immediately at 11:00AM. Dr. John D. Tolbert, Officiating. Bishop Jeffrey Hatcher, Eulogist. Interment Perry Mount Park Cemetery, 878 North Perry Street. Friends and pallbearers will assemble 10:00AM at the church Saturday. Pastor Keys will lie in state at Monument of Faith Missionary Baptist Church, 378 Auburn Avenue, and may be viewed between the hours of 12:00PM - 6:00PM Friday.

Pastor Keys leaves to cherish his memory: his wife, Dorothy Keys; children, James H. Keys, Jr., Julius Charity, Christine Charity, Stephanie (Gregory) Wiley, Venita Boykin and Pastor Christopher Keys; 22 grandchildren; a host of great-grandchildren; siblings, Creola Keys, Emma Jones, Bobbie Keys, Ida Keys and Brenda Keys; a host of nieces and nephews; brother-in-law, Howard (Donna) Cobb; sisters-in-law, Katherine Lawson, Rosemary Woods and Shirley Keys; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Pastor Keys was preceded in death by his parents, Tom and Leona Keys, Sr.; five brothers; and two sisters.

Cemetery Details

Perry Mount Park Cemetery

878 N. Perry St.
Pontiac, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 31. 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Monument of Faith Missionary Baptist Church
378 Auburn Avenue
Pontiac, MI

Family Hour

JUN 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Missionary Baptist Church
113-123 Wessen Street
Pontiac, MI 48341

Funeral Service

JUN 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Missionary Baptist Church
113-123 Wessen Street
Pontiac, MI 48341

Tribute Wall

PD

“ To the Keys & MOF Families,
It's been well over a year now & we're coming
to terms that we can't pick up the phone &
dial 248-722-6868 anymore. Nor will I hear
Pastor Keys tell me, awwwh Career Girl you
can handle this. He had so much faith in me & encouraged me to do
tasks I never thought I could do. Above all, he trusted my abilities &
Rev. Dean's. Pastor Keys was certainly one of a kind. We are
forever thankful for the time God loaned so many this Servant. May
you continue to rest in peace. 🙏❤️



Pastor Tommy & Lady Deborah Dean - December 28, 2025 at 11:29 AM

CF

“ Unfortunately, I've just heard of Rev. Keys passing. My family and I
have many fond memories of "Rev" over the years! My condolences
and prayers are with the family. His legacy lives on..
From: The families of Gloria Jackson and Joseph Farley

Cassandra Farley - June 20, 2024 at 12:36 PM

LP

“ Lenice Powell lit a candle in memory of
Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Lenice Powell - June 01, 2024 at 12:40 PM

BT

“ Reverend Bruce Taylor and mother Doris Harvest as well as the rest of the Taylor family want to send love to the Keith family on the passing of our cousin God bless you all

Bruce Taylor - June 01, 2024 at 11:07 AM

PA

“ My condolences to Keys family

The Pattillo's Family

Pattillo - June 01, 2024 at 10:34 AM

AS

“ Love You Rev, you were apart of my life since I was about 8yrs old, I can still remember you, Bill English and Leatherwood laughing and talking to my Dad, you knew how much you meant to me when my father passed. To The Entire Keys Family, Monument Family my heart aches. Mrs Keys Love You Much, Jesus you don't have a soldier you have a lieutenant God bless Rev!!

Anthony Sharp - May 31, 2024 at 11:57 PM

ZJ

Condolences to the Keys family! Zandra Jones and family! S. Carolina.

Zandra Jones - June 01, 2024 at 10:40 AM

ZJ

Our Condolences to the Keys Family! Nate Jones and family!

Zandra Jones - June 01, 2024 at 10:42 AM

SB

“ Sister Keys, family and church family, our thoughts are with you as we remember the life of our beloved Freedom Fighter and friend. Take comfort in knowing heaven is our forever home. Love always...

NOCB NAACP

President Boothe

Executive Committee and members



Stephanie Spears Boothe - May 31, 2024 at 08:06 PM

CJ

“ Cheryl Jackson lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Cheryl Jackson - May 31, 2024 at 06:53 PM

RS

“ Sister Keys, the entire Keys family, friends and the Monument of Faith Missionary Baptist Church family.

We know there is "A time to be born, and a time to dies; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;" Ecclesiastes 3:2

Our sincere condolences. Greater Concord Missionary Baptist Church family.

Dr. Cullian W. Hill, Founder

Rena Williams, Secy - May 31, 2024 at 04:45 PM

NN

“ NOCB NAACP purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..



NOCB NAACP - May 31, 2024 at 01:31 PM

NN

“ NOCB NAACP planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..

NOCB NAACP - May 31, 2024 at 01:31 PM

RB

“ My condolences to Pastor Keys family and church members. Pastor Keys was a pastor who was fearless, he went to places where "some" pastors dare not go, he knew how to comfort and calm people who were in terrible events.



I admired him in the civic circle, no council person, no mayor or any elected official, who did not do what they were elected to do "serve the people, not themselves" He did not bow down to them, he told it like it was."

I hear the radio hosts of WMKM 1440 am Detroit, say only nice things about him. They are telling the truth. I last saw him when it was cold outside and we were in the bank. He always spoke to me and greeted me. He was so friendly.

Pontiac will miss this great man.

Renee Beckley - May 31, 2024 at 11:53 AM

PC

“ *Pauline Clark lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Pauline Clark - May 30, 2024 at 04:33 PM

RW

“ *Rev Mark & Lynn Windley purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



Rev Mark & Lynn Windley - May 30, 2024 at 03:11 PM

RW

“ *Rev Mark & Lynn Windley planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*

Rev Mark & Lynn Windley - May 30, 2024 at 03:11 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



May 30, 2024 at 01:31 PM

BR

“ *Barbara RogersLandry lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Barbara RogersLandry - May 30, 2024 at 08:25 AM

MF

“ *Mary Taylor and Family. purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



Mary Taylor and Family. - May 29, 2024 at 10:51 PM

SF

“ *Shirley Keys & Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



Shirley Keys & Family - May 29, 2024 at 10:38 PM

TK

“ *The family of the late Hubert Keys purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



The family of the late Hubert Keys - May 29, 2024 at 09:32 PM



“ Rest in paradise my dear brother, may your soul rest in the arms of our Lord Jesus Christ,you will surely be missed

Fred Vining - May 29, 2024 at 12:28 PM



“ From the Allied Human Services Team purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..



From the Allied Human Services Team - May 29, 2024 at 09:58 AM



“ Gloria Proby lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Gloria Proby - May 29, 2024 at 02:33 AM



“ Le Le Douglas lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Le Le Douglas - May 28, 2024 at 11:08 PM

TL

“ Theresa L. purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi
phyllum for the family of Pastor James H.
"Jaybird" Keys Sr..



Theresa L. - May 28, 2024 at 09:22 PM

TL

“ Theresa L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor James H.
"Jaybird" Keys Sr..

Theresa L. - May 28, 2024 at 09:22 PM

RH

“ Lit a candle in the memory of James H. "J. Bird" Keys Sr. RIP

Regina Haynes - May 28, 2024 at 08:24 PM

RH

“ Lit a candle in the memory of James H.
"J.Bird" Keys, Sr. RIP!



Rita Haynes - May 28, 2024 at 08:22 PM

MK

“ *My Condolences and Prayers for the Keys Family May God give you Peace , Strength ,Comfort and Inner Healing*



Min.Lou & Verneita Kemp - May 28, 2024 at 07:24 PM

WM

“ *Welcome Baptist Church Deaconess Ministr purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



Welcome Baptist Church Deaconess Ministr - May 28, 2024 at 01:31 PM

WM

“ *Welcome Baptist Church Deaconess Ministr planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*

Welcome Baptist Church Deaconess Ministr - May 28, 2024 at 01:31 PM

TB

“ *Tracey Burrell lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Tracey Burrell - May 28, 2024 at 12:12 AM

TB

Deepest sympathy and condolences to Pastor Keys family May God WRAP His Arms Around You All and Comfort AND Strengthen You All At A time such as this and after, IN JESUS MIRACULOUS NAME AMENNNNN.....I remember the last time I seen Pastor Keys, I said Pastor you are the last of the Mohicans left and a man of greatness , who will help anyone if you can and one of the real ones that will do anyone's funeral if a family doesn't have a Pastor and a Wedding I said Pastor if your gone I don't know who would carry your torch....MAY GOD BLESS YOUR SOUL ALWAYS AMENNNNN.....

Tracey Burrell - May 28, 2024 at 12:27 AM

BL

Words can't express our deepest gratitude towards an amazing pastor. Pastor James Keys. So kind hearted, would help anyone. Yes without a doubt Rev and James Keys Junior will be missed by many. The truth of the matter. It's hard to believe that he's in our future. Rest well Pastor Keys. Bishop Theresa Lee New Birth International Church.

Bishop Theresa Lee - May 28, 2024 at 09:16 PM

BB

“ *Betty Brown lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Betty Brown - May 27, 2024 at 01:05 PM

PG

“ *Pamela Gordon lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Pamela Gordon - May 27, 2024 at 09:15 AM

LI

“ Lee Homes, Inc purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..



Lee Homes, Inc - May 26, 2024 at 01:12 PM

BL

“ Bill Luke lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Bill Luke - May 24, 2024 at 08:37 PM

JM

“ Janice McClain-Morgan lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Janice McClain-Morgan - May 24, 2024 at 06:18 PM

ME

“ Rest peaceful Rev.keys truly miss



Melaniehall - May 24, 2024 at 05:12 PM

D(

“ Donna (Brown)Stephens lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Donna (Brown)Stephens - May 24, 2024 at 02:52 PM

EG

“ Evangelist Sarah P. Gray lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Evangelist Sarah P. Gray - May 23, 2024 at 09:51 PM

SM

“ Pastor Keys either Eulogized or Married so many of our family members. He was one of a kind, and will truly be missed! May the memories of Pastor Keys bring a smile to your face, May your faith give you strength, and May God comfort and keep you. With our very deepest condolences.



Grant & Sheila Mason

Sheila Mason - May 23, 2024 at 08:50 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



May 23, 2024 at 07:26 PM



“ *RODGER & LISA ALEXANDER FAMILY sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



RODGER & LISA ALEXANDER FAMILY - May 23, 2024 at 03:49 PM



“ *we marched and fought for civil rights, a forever friend and spiritual leader - will truly miss times spent and deep conversations - I know that his soul found favor in his transition to the Ancestral life, that the Creator and Ancestors received him with joy and embraced him with song - to the family wishing you peace to bring comfort, the courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to forever hold in your heart - today and always, may fond memories bring you peace, support, strength and may you be surrounded by love during this difficult time - 🙏❤️*
Marcia Battles



Marcia Battles - May 23, 2024 at 01:26 PM

RW

“ To my family...My most deepest condolences during this time. May God give all of you the strength and peace that is needed. The angels are rejoicing! A Godfather whom I will never forget!!! Love you all!



Robin White - May 23, 2024 at 12:05 PM

HB

“ Helen Butler sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Helen Butler - May 22, 2024 at 11:58 PM

PJ

“ IN THE CONDOLENCE AND PRAYERS TO THE FAMILY. SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS



Patricia Jenkins - May 22, 2024 at 09:55 PM

BR

“ Beverly Walker Rollins lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Beverly Walker Rollins - May 22, 2024 at 06:14 PM



“ *My heartfelt condolences to the Keyes family. You're in my thoughts and prayers.*

Felesa Adams Robinson - May 22, 2024 at 05:26 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Adele Hopkins - May 22, 2024 at 04:44 PM



“ *Our Sincere Condolences, Prayers for family. Hold on to Gods hand he will give you strength.*

Anthony Cooper & Shirley Mason-Cooper



Shirley Mason-Cooper - May 22, 2024 at 04:41 PM



“ *Laurita Washington lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Laurita Washington - May 22, 2024 at 03:41 PM

BF

“ *Brenda White And White Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Brenda White and white family - May 22, 2024 at 02:43 PM

PM

“ *To the entire Keys family, a life of love is what he shared, he never met a stranger. Open his heart and church to anyone, so let the angel go to heaven sing, preach and tell his jokes. Yes he will dearly be missed.....*

Condolences: Patricia and Makeitha Morris

Patricia Morris - May 22, 2024 at 02:28 PM

CB

“ *Cynthia Blackwell lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Cynthia blackwell - May 22, 2024 at 02:01 PM

LT

“ *Lula Trice lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Lula Trice - May 22, 2024 at 12:48 PM

YF

“ Your forever fit family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..



Your forever fit family - May 22, 2024 at 12:43 PM

KB

“ Praying for the family 🙏🙏🙏

Ken & Ernestine Bush - May 22, 2024 at 11:53 AM



“ Michael Williams lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Michael Williams - May 22, 2024 at 11:40 AM

DC

“ Sending prayers and condolences to the Keys family he will be truly missed



Darlene Croskey - May 22, 2024 at 10:49 AM

ET

“ Ernestine Tolbert lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Ernestine Tolbert - May 22, 2024 at 10:08 AM

PS

“ Paul & Arline Simmons sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Paul & Arline Simmons - May 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM

GL

“ Condolences from the Ledsinger family



Gary Ledsinger - May 22, 2024 at 08:34 AM

MW

“ Marie Wilson sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Marie Wilson - May 22, 2024 at 06:32 AM

KW

“ *Katrina Wilson lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Katrina Wilson - May 22, 2024 at 06:32 AM

AW

“ *Alvina Williams sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Alvina Williams - May 22, 2024 at 12:37 AM

MR

“ *To First Lady Dorothy and the entire Keys Family: Rev. Keys and the Keys Family came into my life over 55 years ago and the love of the Keys Family flowed into my family. Condolences and prayers are extended to you all.*
Mildred Rainge-Works, formerly of Pontiac, now residing in Gordonville, Alabama

Mildred Rainge-Works - May 21, 2024 at 11:33 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr..*



May 21, 2024 at 11:18 PM

MA

“ *A General, gone far too soon. May his legacy continue to move forward.*

Minister Allen - May 21, 2024 at 10:31 PM

CJ

“ *Connie Joyner lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Connie Joyner - May 21, 2024 at 09:28 PM

KA

“ *Katherine lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Katherine - May 21, 2024 at 08:52 PM

BC

“ *Betty Cottingham lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Betty Cottingham - May 21, 2024 at 08:25 PM

DD

“ *Dr. Brenda Dilworth lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Dr. Brenda Dilworth - May 21, 2024 at 08:21 PM

KC

“ *Kara Carter sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Kara Carter - May 21, 2024 at 07:46 PM

MS

“ *Sending love, prayers, and condolences to the family. I'm going to miss my pastor saying nay nay fry me some catfish, and get me some coffee with 5 sugars. You were a great inspiration in my life. I love and miss you. “ weeping might endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning “. Love you Nay nay*



Michele R Smoot - May 21, 2024 at 07:26 PM

LW

“ *To the family of pastor keys, may God be with you always from C-BOY and Family. He always called me C-BOY. LC And Emma Wilson*

Lc Wilson - May 21, 2024 at 06:53 PM

CE

“ *Carlotta Emery lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Carlotta Emery - May 21, 2024 at 06:49 PM

KL

“ *Khalilah Lightner lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Khalilah Lightner - May 21, 2024 at 06:42 PM

RS

“ *Rev. Tony & Sylvia Simpson lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Rev. Tony & Sylvia Simpson - May 21, 2024 at 06:38 PM

DS

“ *Deacon Smoot lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Deacon Smoot - May 21, 2024 at 06:17 PM

CC

“ My condolences and prayers for Lady Dorothy his son's and daughters and the entire families as well as the church family. May the Peace of God which surpasses all understanding continue to take you all through this transition. My, "I called him the community pastor," Pastor Keys will always have a place in my heart. I will forever remember him driving from Pontiac Michigan to Louisville Kentucky in 2021 when my son passed. Love to all of my Monument of Faith family.



Charlene Causey - May 21, 2024 at 06:16 PM

QS

Brother Keys was my main man. Though he knew I was not a Christian, I used to tell him I loved hearing him preach because he was no hypocrite. Brother Keys was real.

He was a good man and he loved to hear me play trumpet. We have done a few funerals together where he preached and I played.

He would always laugh out loud if I hit a lick that he thought was clever and musically interesting.

We talked a lot about life and I always walked away knowing that as black men, regardless of our varying beliefs, brotherly love continued. I will surely miss his hearty laugh, his down home spun humor, and his loving heart.

Pontiac will never see his likes again. A big hole is left in our city at his loss.

Farewell good brother.

Bro. Q

Quincy Stewart - May 21, 2024 at 07:21 PM



Rest in the arms of the master pastor keys will truly be missed

Kathy Mcgee - May 21, 2024 at 08:57 PM

ZF

“ Zola Foster sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Zola Foster - May 21, 2024 at 05:52 PM

EW

“ Evelyn Williams sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Evelyn Williams - May 21, 2024 at 05:41 PM

PL

“ My Prayers and Sympathies to entire Family. He was a GOOD SOLDIER!

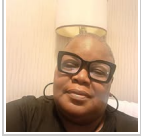
Pastor Jerry Love - May 21, 2024 at 04:48 PM

RJ

“ Rosie Jordan lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.



Rosie Jordan - May 21, 2024 at 04:47 PM



“ *Please except our deepest condolences for your loss. May God continue to guide you through this very difficult time. Felix and Beatrice Brooks.*

Suze Brooks-Searcy - May 21, 2024 at 03:12 PM



“ *Kimberly Griffin lit a candle in memory of Pastor James H. "Jaybird" Keys Sr.*



Kimberly Griffin - May 21, 2024 at 03:06 PM